



*WIC PROGRAM*  
*Building a Healthy Montana*  
*Promoting & Supporting*  
*Breastfeeding*

January 6, 2010

To: Authorized WIC Retailers & LARCs

SUBJECT: New WIC Food List notes & upcoming conference call

The implementation of the new WIC Foods is going well! Thank you for all of your efforts in training your staff and working with WIC participants during this transition.

If you have feedback, questions, or product availability issues, please plan to join WIC staff for a **"How's It Going?"** conference call. Two calls have been scheduled and you are encouraged to participate - but not required. The conference calls are scheduled for Tuesday, January 26, 2010, at 9am or 2pm. The call-in number is: 1-866-910-4857, and pass code is: 768324.

The following items may still be causing some confusion. Please review them with your staff.

- The old (green) food list has now been phased out and your store should only be seeing benefits for the new WIC foods. Some of these benefits may still be blue (with the tag line), but all benefits should be used with the new yellow food list. Be sure a yellow Food List and Benefit Redemption Guide are placed at each register.
- Just a reminder – the new Food List does not have the "least expensive" requirement that the old list did. WIC participants may choose from any of the authorized brands listed on the food list. For example, they may choose to purchase Skippy peanut butter instead of the store brand. Milk is now store brand if available. For example, Albertson's stores carry Albertson's and Shoppers Value milk as store brand milk. WIC participants may choose between these two brands of milk. If the store should be out of both of these brands (or does not carry a store brand milk), the WIC participant may purchase name brand milk. As before, WIC participants may only purchase the type of milk listed on the benefit. If they can purchase organic, lactose-free or goat milk, it will be listed on the benefit.
- The food item description line on the benefit which reads: 1 - 16-OZ WHOLE GRAIN CHOICE means the WIC customer may choose to purchase any of the authorized whole grain products listed under "Brown Rice" (16 to 14 oz bag or box) or "Tortillas" or "Whole Grain Bread".
- Authorized bread availability is still an issue in some areas of the state. Some stores that *can* get the bread are having issues keeping enough on the shelves. Please remember that only the two brands listed on the Food List are approved and other breads may not be substituted. WIC participants are issued benefits throughout the month, which makes it a little more difficult to predict when they will be shopping. This will hopefully become more manageable with time.
- The Fruit & Vegetable Benefit may not be redeemed for more than the maximum value printed on the benefit. Please assist WIC participants in choosing items to remove from the order to bring the total purchase to or under the maximum value. WIC participants may not pay the difference in price. Combining more than one FVB during a transaction helps the WIC participant get the most value for their benefits and is encouraged if your store registers can accommodate this type of transaction.

- The seasonal chart on the lower half of the Fruit & Vegetable section of the food list is there to help WIC participants shop wisely. It is **not** a list of items they can purchase from. In general, WIC participants may purchase any fresh fruit, fresh vegetable or frozen vegetable - except potatoes. Please see the Food List for the restrictions.
- WIC participants have indicated that the use of the "WIC Approved Item" shelf tags has been helpful – especially when placed under the bread, tortillas, and soy beverage. If you choose to use the shelf tags, please be sure they have been accurately placed.
- Most WIC participants have the yellow ID packet, but a few still have the green one. Please accept either at this time. No ID packet = No sale. Cashiers need the packet to compare signatures at the end of the transaction. This step ensures a signature is on the benefit and that an authorized person is using the benefit.
- If you need more Food Lists, Benefit Redemption Guides, shelf tags, or have further questions, please let me know!

Thank you for your participation in WIC.

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